



Ben Adlin / Daily Journal

From left: Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer; David M. Ring, vice president of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles and a partner at Taylor & Ring; Daniel Ben-Zvi of ADR Services Inc., who chairs Mediation Awareness Week; Joseph C. Markowitz, president of Southern California Mediation Association; L.A. City Councilman Paul Koretz, who sponsored the event; Lucie Barron, founder and president of ADR Services Inc.; Robert A. Olson, president of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel and a partner at Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland LLP; and Songhai Miguda-Armstead, director of city attorney's dispute resolution program.

City of Los Angeles observes Mediation Awareness Week

A group of public officials, private attorneys and other advocates of alternative dispute resolution convened in Los Angeles City Hall last week to mark the kickoff of Mediation Awareness Week, which spans April 15-19 and is meant to emphasize the benefits of out-of-court resolutions.

"All of us in public service are in the dispute-resolution business in one way or another," City Attorney Mike Feuer, himself a trained mediator, told the council. He added that representatives of his office would be visiting council members' chambers to promote alternative dispute resolution.

Daniel Ben-Zvi of ADR Services Inc., the chairman of Mediation Awareness Week, asked council members to consider all of the mediations going on across the city at that moment. "Could you imagine if the city had to pay for all those extra judges and courts?" he asked.

Another proponent, Southern California Mediation Association President Joseph C. Markowitz, noted the ability of alternative dispute resolution to settle disputes that are highly emotionally charged or might not be sufficiently grounded in the law. He called mediation "a method to resolve conflicts that never could've gone to the courts."

The contingent also addressed the powerful Board of Public Works, where President Kevin James, a former federal prosecutor, praised the benefits of mediation.

Councilman Paul Koretz sponsored this year's council resolution. Congressional candidate Wendy Gruel was the awareness week's founding sponsor in 2004, when Gruel was an L.A. councilwoman.